2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

Chapter 13

HOUSEKEEPING PROBLEMS

BEFORE we could really settle down to the business of life there were several practical problems to clear up. Water was naturally the first item. The jolly little stream just in front of our rest-house did not run by any means all the time. It brings water from the great glacier behind Báltít; the actual aqueduct channel is some twelve miles long, and represents an amazing feat of engineering. It was made about three generations ago—before which the "New Settlements" of Aliábád and her outliers did not exist—when iron was still practically unknown in Hunza. The excavations and the galleries on which it is piloted so skilfully over gorges and along impossible cliff faces were all made with wooden shovels and picks tipped with ibex horn. The people had—and have—no instruments of precision, no theodolites, nor levels. Against this they have some hereditary instinct that we lack, and an inherited or traditional common sense that enables them to adjust the necessary downward gradients exactly right. You never hear of anyone making a false shot in laying out a water channel, and you never hear of any "labour" difficulties. When a new work is undertaken for the public good it is supervised by the Mir, or his Wazir acting for him, and it is carried out by communal labour, of which everyone recognizes the justice and necessity. The Dála, which will frequently recur in my story, is the main aqueduct that supplies Aliábád, but it has to feed other villages *en route*, and our stream, which was its last section, was therefore only in action at certain times. These are, however, known to everyone, and our people drew water enough when they could get it to carry on for the day or half-day when it would be cut off.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

the past year the total collected from fines imposed by me upon the citizens of Hunza totaled less than 200 rupees. You know that my people do not have much money. There is no way or means of earning money—except by the few. We do not require money in order to live in Hunza. Further, the full amount that was collected in this manner was used in the maintenance of the irrigation system."

I waved my hand and said, "I only asked. I didn't think it was true, but I've read so many tales about Hunza in which ridiculous and fantastic statements are made without any justification or background."

"A few years ago," I went on, "two of the most influential and widely circulated magazines in the United States published an article by a famed and capable couple of writers—man and wife. I know they visited Hunza on two occasions because I saw their names in your guest book. Now the story they told and which both of these magazines published stated that it was a custom in Hunza for the mother-in-law to go and live with a newly married couple and remain with them on their honeymoon to teach them the ways of life. You explained that this was the reason why Hunzan marriages were so successful and there was seldom, if ever, a divorce.

"Before asking you to clarify this, I just want to tell you that I read this story and when I came to this specific part, I could hardly believe my eyes. But, as I have learned, there are many strange customs followed by different people throughout the world and of course, this could be absolutely true. But it certainly is strange and weird sounding to me anyway. So tell me, is that story true? Is it the custom of the people of Hunza to have the mother-in-law stay with the newly married couple during their honeymoon?"

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Among people—yes, even experienced old-time gardeners and orchardists—there are many who believe that pollination by bees is required in all cases to set a crop of fruit. For many types of fruit and plants, this holds true; pollination by bees or other insects is essential. But in the case of the apricot and many others, wind pollination is the means that nature employs, and actually it is safer and surer than pollination by insects. Rain is also an effective pollinator, contrary to many people's conception and belief. I believe I would be safe in stating that wind pollination is the means of fertilizing more plants than can be claimed for bees and other insects combined. 245

All Hunzans own their own land and house. They pay no rent or taxes. Each citizen does his share of road building, taking care of the water channels and maintenance. The Mir leases his land to various individuals, most of them young people who as yet own no land of their own, or those who have insufficient for their needs. They pay him by means of services rendered and shares of the crops. 423 651 [653] 427 643

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
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number in an institution?

Let's face it! Isn't it true that our responsibilities are becoming too big a burden for us? Aren't we trying or attempting to encompass a little too much? Aren't we reaching beyond our ken—beyond our abilities?

You see, the people of Hunza aren't burdened with all the things I've mentioned above, and therefore, it is easy to see why they enjoy just being alive and healthy.

It must be recognized that the people of Hunza lead, probably, what is the most simple life known to any people on the face of the globe. They are not trying to master the world, their own fates or that of their neighbors. They are busily occupied in looking after just themselves.

Selfish? I don't know. They certainly don't interfere with anyone else or ask anyone for anything. In Hunza a man's responsibilities consist of tilling a bit of soil to produce food for himself and the members of his household. The house is actually small—usually a two-roomed affair. He has to make provisions to store sufficient food for his winter needs—plus a mite for a neighbor who might run short. Then he may be called upon to contribute a day's work or two a year on the roads or toward maintaining the aqueducts. And that's it! From there on out, his time, his life and his liberty are his own. They even have it better than the red Indians in America . . . because the Hunzans have a permanent abode rather than a windy tent.

Do you think that mankind can improve on a setup like that?

It could be that some of our difficulties stem from the fact that we try to work against nature, whereas in Hunza, when nature pulls the switch and brings on winter or creates other conditions that bring activities